

In the Claims

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) A method for enabling graphic-based linking to the internet, comprising:

receiving digital data corresponding to a graphic image;

steganographically encoding the graphic image to hide plural bit address information therein; and

distributing the encoded graphic image data to users, who can decode the address information therefrom and use same in establishing a link to the internet.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the graphic image conveys said plural-bit address information notwithstanding transformation into or out of digital form.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the address information is not recognizable as such to human viewers of a rendered version of the encoded graphic.

10. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the address information comprises a URL.

11. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the address information comprises an index to a remote data structure, the remote data structure having a corresponding URL address stored therein.

12. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the encoded graphic conveys said address information notwithstanding transformation into or out of digital form.

13. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the graphic comprises a photographic image.

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14. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium having stored thereon a graphic encoded according to claim-1 7.

15. (New) The method of claim 7 in which the graphic is a color image, rather than a grayscale image.

16. (New) The method of claim 7 in which the steganographic encoding is adapted in strength in accordance with local characteristics of the graphic image, said adaptation comprising more than two different strengths.

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17. (New) The method of claim 7 in which said distributing comprises distributing the encoded graphic image data in digital, rather than hardcopy, form.

18. (New) The method of claim 7 wherein the plural-bit address information is encoded redundantly through the graphic image, wherein all of said plural bits can be recovered both from first and second non-overlapping excerpts of said image.

19. (New) A method of initiating access to a computer via a data communications medium, the method comprising:

receiving artwork corresponding to an object to be printed, the artwork including text and background;

steganographically embedding into at least the background of said artwork certain information indicative of an address associated with said computer; and

printing said object using the artwork into which said information has been steganographically embedded.

20. (New) A physical object printed on a substrate and including text and background, at least the background having a plural-bit code steganographically embedded therein, said code being an index to a data structure that specifies address information of a computer resource that is to be associated with said object.

21. (New) The object of claim 20 wherein said data structure is maintained on a computer separate from the computer whose address information is to be associated with the object.